

### CLAIMS

Claim 41 (Currently Amended): A slicing machine for slicing food products ~~[[ (1) ]]~~, in ~~particular blocks of sausage, meat or cheese, having comprising~~ a rotating cutting blade ~~[[ (2) ]]~~, which is mounted so as to be displaceable parallel to ~~its axis of rotation (3) a~~ rotation axis of the cutting blade, characterised in that it comprises and a counterweight ~~[[ (4) ]]~~, which ~~may be displaced~~ is axially displaced in the opposite direction from the cutting blade ~~[[ (2) ]]~~.

Claim 42 (Canceled):

Claim 43 (Currently Amended): ~~[[A]] The slicing machine according to any one of the preceding of claim[s]] 41, characterised in that wherein~~ displacement of the cutting blade, ~~(2) and/or of the counterweight, or both~~ [[ (4) ]] takes place independently of ~~[[the]]~~ a rotational speed of the cutting blade.

Claim 44 (Currently Amended): ~~[[A]] The slicing machine according to any one of the preceding of claim[s]] 43, characterised in that the cutting blade further~~ compris[es]]ing a drive shaft ~~[[ (5) ]]~~, wherein and in that the cutting blade, ~~(2) and/or the counterweight, or both (4) is(are) is~~ mounted so as to be displaceable along the drive shaft ~~[[ (5) ]]~~.

Claim 45 - 49 (Canceled):

Claim 50 (Currently Amended): A method for axial displacement of a cutting blade~~[[s]]~~ during operation of a slicing machine, comprising the steps of axially displacing ~~characterised in that~~ a counterweight ~~[[ (4) ]]~~ on a drive shaft ~~[[ (5) ]]~~ of the cutting blade ~~is displaced in~~ ~~[[the]]~~ an opposite direction from the cutting blade ~~[[ (2) ]]~~.

Claim 51 (Currently Amended): ~~[[A]] The method according to of claim 50, characteri[[e]]zed in that displacement wherein the displacing step, the displacement of the counterweight and the cutting blade are achieved~~ is effected synchronously.

Claim 52 (Currently Amended): [[A]] The method according to of claim 50, characterised in that wherein displacement of the cutting blade, (2) and of the counterweight, or both [[(4)]] is effected achieved by a spindle drive (6).

Claim 53 (Currently Amended): A method of using at least one Use of counterweight[[s]] in a slicing machine comprising the steps of (4) displaceably axially displacing the at least one counterweight in the opposite direction from a cutting blade [[(2)]] to stabili[[s]]ze the running of the cutting blade [[(2)]] of [[a]] the slicing machine, which wherein the cutting blade includes an axis of rotation, and the cutting blade, the counterweight, or both is mounted so as to be displaceable parallel to [[its]] the axis of rotation [[(3)]].

Claim 54 (Currently Amended): The method of Use according to claim 53, characterised in that wherein the step of axially displacing the at least one counterweight compensates for forces, and/or moments, or both arising during displacement of the blade are compensated.

Claim 55 (Currently Amended): The method of claim 53 Use according to claim 43 or claim 44, characterised in that the further comprising the step of adjusting a zero point may be adjusted by axial displacement of the cutting blade [[(2)]] of [[a]] the slicing machine.

Claim 56 (Currently Amended): The method Use according to claim 53, characterised in that the further comprising the step of measuring a torque produced by a of the drive of the cutting blade during is measured during displacement thereof.

Claim 57 – 67 (Canceled):

Claim 68 (Currently Amended): The slicing machine A device according to of claim 41, characterised in that wherein adjustment of [[the]] a cutting gap is effected when is achieved while the cutting blade is stationary or rotating.

Claim 69 (Currently Amended): The slicing machine A device according to of claim 41, characterised in that the wherein an axial position of the cutting blade is not substantially

changed after [[it]] the cutting blade has come into contact with [[the]] an adjusting limit stop.

Claim 70 - 75 (Canceled):

Claim 76 (New): The slicing machine of claim 41, wherein the counterweight is axially displaced relative to a feedback controlled drive shaft.

Claim 77 (New): The slicing machine of claim 76, wherein the cutting blade is axially displaceable along the drive shaft in the same or opposite direction of the counterweight.

Claim 78 (New): The slicing machine of claim 41, wherein the cutting blade is a circular blade, a helical blade, or a crescent shaped blade.

Claim 79 (New): The slicing machine of claim 78, wherein the cutting blade is a crescent shaped blade.

Claim 80 (New): The slicing machine of claim 78, wherein the displacement of the cutting blade, the counterweight, or both is achieved by a spindle arranged within the drive shaft, the spindle including a feedback-controlled drive that interacts with a thread of at least one sleeve, which is connected with the cutting blade, the counterweight, or both, for independent movement thereof.

Claim 81 (New): The slicing machine of claim 41, wherein the displacement of the cutting blade, the counterweight, or both is achieved by a spindle arranged within the drive shaft, the spindle including a feedback-controlled drive that interacts with a thread of at least one sleeve, which is connected with the cutting blade, the counterweight, or both, for independent movement thereof.

Claim 82 (New): The slicing machine of claim 78, wherein the drive shaft is driven by a toothed belt wheel, which interacts with the feedback-controlled drive; and wherein the

counterweight is mounted non-rotationally, but axially displaceably on one or more bushes on the drive shaft, the drive shaft including a spindle, which is connected by way of a toothed belt wheel to the feedback-controlled drive.